

Swain County

Consolidated Department of Health and Human Services Social Services Division Annual Report FY 2015-2016



Mission Statement

To meet clients at their point of need and to provide preventive, supportive, and restorative services delivered with competence and compassion.

The Director's Message

Board of Commissioners for Fiscal year 2015-2016

**Philip Carson, Chairman
David Monteith, Vice Chair
Kenneth Parton
Ben Bushyhead
Danny Burns**

Interim Health and Human Services Director

Kevin King

Sheila Sutton, MSW

In July 2015 Swain County became a Consolidated Department of Health and Human Services. The department of Social Services strives to provide a safety net for Swain County families who find themselves in need. This Agency is charged with a huge responsibility, and we make every effort to deliver direct services to the citizens of Swain County in a timely manner. Citizens present to our Agency for a myriad of reasons, some of which are due to Swain County's high unemployment rate as many seasonal jobs are discontinued at the end October.

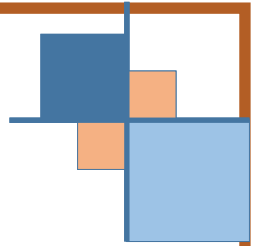
Swain County citizens rely on programs such as Food and Nutrition Services, Medicaid, Non-emergency medical transportation, child care subsidy, heating assistance, emergency assistance and temporary cash assistance, in order to supplement their family's income. These programs are a vital lifeline for our citizens and we are committed to providing families with the resources and services they need to maximize their well-being and self-determination.

The staff at Swain DSS are committed to treating every citizen that walks through our doors with respect and dignity, for they are very aware that hardship can befall any family, and they too could find themselves on the other side of the desk one day.

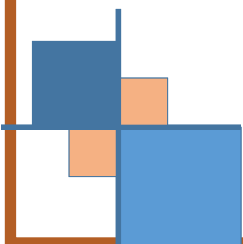
As your DSS director I am honored to work in Swain County and I would like to encourage all citizens to please view our Swain County Webpage and Facebook page for information on programs and upcoming events.

***Sheila Sutton
Director***

SWAIN DSS AGENCY GOALS



- **Swain County DSS will run an effective, resourceful, knowledgeable, and ethical organization.**
- **Children and families at risk of abuse, neglect, and poverty will live in a safe, healthy, and stable environment.**
- **Economically disadvantaged families will become self-determined and strive not to remain dependent on Public assistance.**
- **Families experiencing economic hardship will obtain financial assistance to alleviate their short term crisis.**
- **Aging and disabled adults will be safe and live in the least restrictive settings.**
- **Swain DSS will collaborate with community agencies to ensure services are accessible to all Swain County citizens.**
- **Swain DSS will keep the community informed of all programs and services offered at DSS.**



SWAIN DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES MANAGEMENT TEAM

Kevin King / k_king@swaincountync.gov

Interim Human Services Director: Administration Building: 488-9273 Ext. 2231

Sheila Sutton / sheila.sutton@swaincountync.gov

Director: Swain County Human Services Building: 488-6921
Ext. 2021



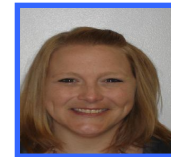
Erin Pooser / erin.pooser@swaincountync.gov

Child Protective /In-Home Services/ Intake Supervisor: Ext. 2017



Bree Clawson / bree.clawson@swaincountync.gov

Foster Care / Licensing/ Adoptions Supervisor: Ext. 2042



Carole Maennle / carole.maennle@swaincountync.gov

Adult Services & CAP/DA Supervisor: Ext. 2012



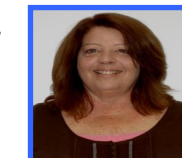
Sonia Monteith / sonia.monteith@swaincountync.gov

Medicaid/Health Choice , Work First Family
Assistance Supervisor: Ext. 2043



Kim Cunningham / kim.cunningham@swaincountync.gov

Food and Nutrition/ Child Support / Energy Programs/ Emergency
Assistance Supervisor: Ext. 2011



Lottie Barker / Lottie.barker@swaincountync.gov

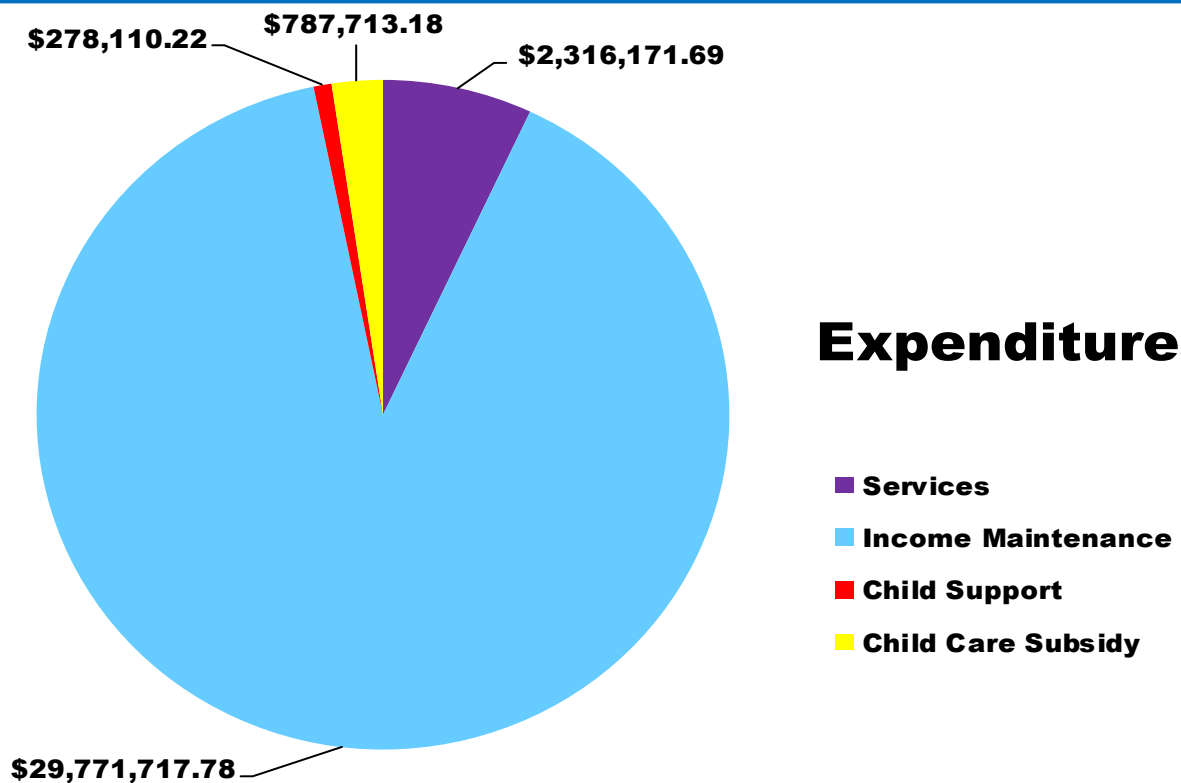
Fiscal Officer: Administration Building: 488-9273 Ext. 2241

Elise Bryson / ebryson@swaincountync.gov

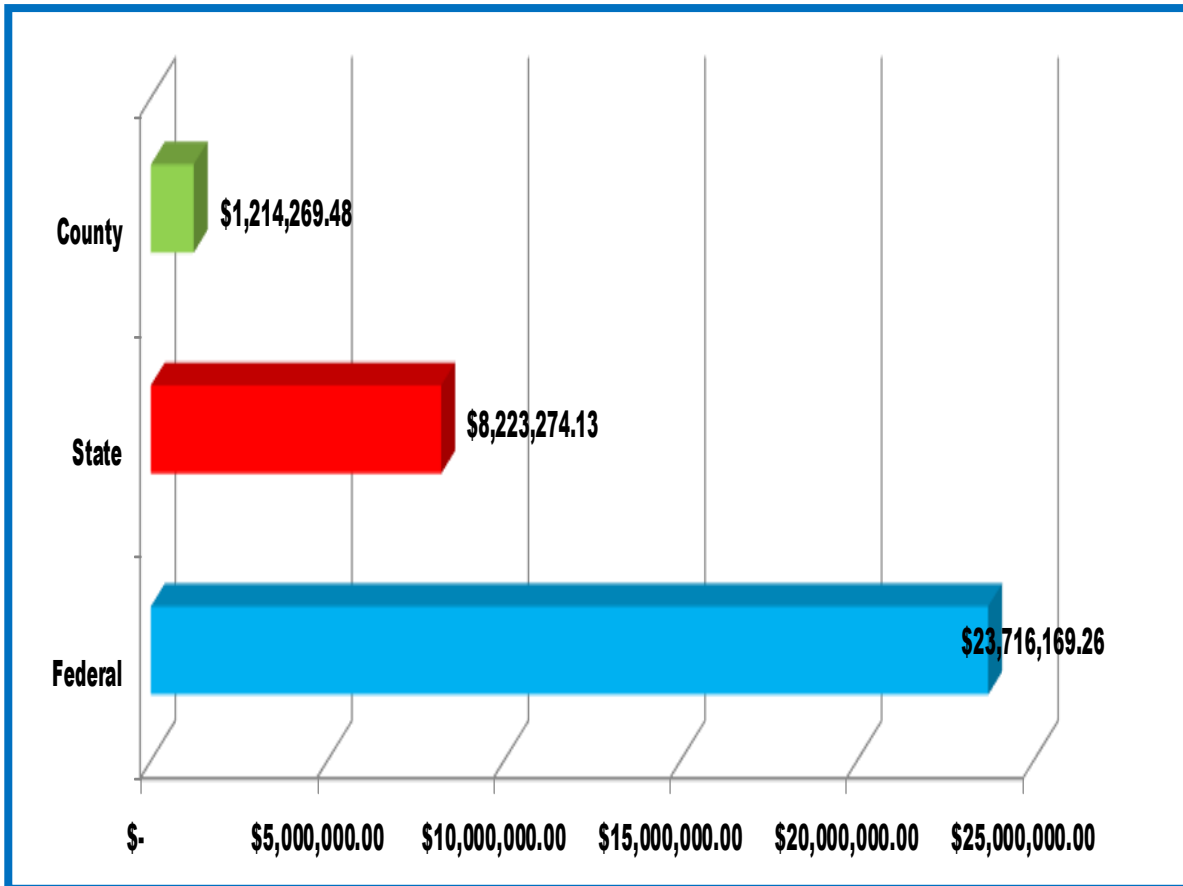
Human Resources: Administration Building: 488-9273 Ext. 2227

Funding for Fiscal Year 2015-2016

DSS *Expenditures* are comprised of various items. In each of the figures by the program type there are partial amounts of salary and benefits, overhead operating expenses such as power, water, phones, and copiers. In each individual program type, such as services, there is foster care, adoption payments, attorney fees and items paid for children. Income maintenance includes food and nutrition benefit amounts and Medicaid claims along with Medicaid transportation, Special Assistance and Long Term Care. Child support expenses include paternity tests and clerk of court fees. Child care subsidy expenses are considered pass through funds since we receive them and pay them back out the following month.



Swain DSS Revenues



DSS Revenues come from three different streams: federal, state and county. DSS receives different types of money that come based on what is paid. Federal revenues come from Food and Nutrition Services, Medicaid claims, Child Care Subsidy, NEMT Transportation and some federal money is received for program specific items such as Foster Care, Adoptions, salaries and benefits. State funds are received for program items. DSS only gets a certain amount of federal and state funds and that is where county funds come in. DSS uses county funds to cover what is not federal or state reimbursed. Partial county funds include salary, benefits and program specific sources that the federal and state will not allow to be claimed for reimbursement.



Connecting with the Community

Customers can come to our office at 80 Academy Street, Bryson City, N.C. Call us at (828) 488-6921, Visit our webpage at www.swaincountync.gov or follow us on Facebook; Swain County Department of Social Services. We want the customer to have a great experience when they walk through our doors. Each person that is in need can be assessed for all of our programs during intake. They only have to tell their story one time, which makes the process less frustrating. For fiscal year 2015-2016 the reception staff logged in an average of 13,113 people for various needs and circumstances. This is an average of 1,093 people per month. We issued 24 work permits, 63 fishing license waivers, and provided 4,033 Medicaid trips for non-medical emergency transportation.



NC Medicaid and Health Choice

Medicaid serves low-income parents, children, seniors, and people with disabilities. North Carolina Medicaid and Health Choice offer different ways that may help pay for some or all of the cost of health care. Each program helps people and families with certain health needs, and income and resource limits. Swain County had an average of **4023** cases in the 2015-2016 fiscal year.



Resources available other than Medicaid:

SHIIP

The **Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP)** counsels Medicare beneficiaries and caregivers about Medicare, Medicare supplements, Medicare Advantage, Medicare Part D, and long-term care insurance. The counselors on our toll-free line offer free and unbiased information regarding Medicare health care products. We also help people recognize and prevent Medicare billing errors and possible fraud and abuse through our NC SMP Program. For SHIIP information Swain County residents can call **828-488-3848**, the local office is located at the Swain County Cooperative Extension at 60 Almond School Road Bryson City, NC 28713. You may also go to www.NCDOI.com/SHIIP for more information.





Affordable Care for those ineligible for Medicaid programs

The Health Insurance Marketplace is for people who don't have health coverage. If you don't have health insurance through a job, Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), or another source that provides qualifying coverage, the Marketplace can help you get covered. Most people must have qualifying health coverage or pay a fee with their 2016 federal taxes. If you don't have coverage in 2016, you'll pay a penalty of either 2.5% of your income, or \$695 per adult (\$347.50 per child) — whichever is higher. In some cases, you might qualify for an exemption from the requirement to have health insurance. For free in person assistance Swain County residents can contact an affordable health care navigator at [828-550-7908](tel:828-550-7908). You may also go to www.healthcare.gov for more information.



FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES

FY 2015-16



In the United States, more than one out of five children lives in a household with food insecurity, which means they do not always know where they will find their next meal. In western North Carolina, this number increases to one out of four children.

FACT: 76% of FNS households include a child, an elderly person or a disabled person- the most vulnerable in our society. These households receive 83% of all FNS benefits. Many qualifying families include full-time workers at low wage jobs.

FACT: The average length of time a household receives FNS is 8-10 months.

FACT: The average monthly FNS benefit per person is \$133.85, or less than \$1.50 per person, per meal. The average FNS household consists of 2.1 people with a gross monthly income of \$744 dollars.

FACT: The overwhelming majority of FNS recipients who can work do so. Almost 70 percent of FNS recipients are not expected to work, primarily because they are children, elderly, or disabled. In North Carolina, almost 73% of all FNS participants are in families with children. Of households with children, almost 87% worked in the previous or following year of receiving and 60% worked while receiving FNS. This supports the strong correlation between unemployment and food stamps.

FACT: \$1 in FNS benefits generates about \$1.70 in localized economic activity. Overall FNS pumped about \$2.43 billion into North Carolina's economy in 2012. FNS not only helps low-income people buy groceries, it frees up cash for other expenses, such as medical care, clothing, home repairs and childcare. Local businesses and their employees benefit greatly, which boosts the economy as a whole.

FACT: National statistics state that less than 1% of FNS recipients are potentially committing fraud.

SWAIN COUNTY FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES BY THE NUMBERS:

2015-2016 YEARLY TOTALS OF APPLICATIONS

1,040

AVERAGE NUMBER OF RECERTIFICATIONS PER MONTH

94

AVERAGE ACTIVE CASES PER MONTH

1,290

LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES

CHEROKEE COMPASSIONATE MINISTRIES	(828) 497-2819
GRACE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY	(828) 488-1042
VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH (MANNA)	(828) 488-6717
BRYSON CITY PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH	(828) 488-2480
LIVING WATERS FOOD PANTRY	(916) 868-4373

LOCAL FOOD RESOURCES

SWAIN COUNTY FAMILY RESOURCE CENTER (828) 488-7505 - DISTRIBUTES VARIOUS FOOD ITEMS WEEKLY ON TUESDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS BEGINNING AT 10:30 AM. PLEASE CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION

MANNA FOOD DISTRIBUTION THROUGH VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH (828) 488-6717- THIS DISTRIBUTION IS ON THE FIRST THURSDAY OF EVERY MONTH WITH SUMMER HOURS OF 4-6 AND WINTER HOURS OF 3-5

<https://www.mannafoodbank.org/>

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/low-income.../food-nutrition-services-food-stamps>



WORK FIRST FAMILY ASSISTANCE

The Work First Family Assistance Program is about helping families achieve self-sufficiency by helping adults support themselves and provide for their children and to help families reach their self-sufficiency goals, Work First provides employment services, other supportive services, and time-limited cash assistance to families with children under age 18. The family is referred to child support to help get additional financial support for the children. Please call (828) 488-6921 for more information.

<https://www.ncdhhs.gov/assistance/low-income-services/work-first-cash-assistance>

PROGRAM INTEGRITY

2015-2016

**TOTAL YEARLY FRAUD
COLLECTIONS**

\$ 33,225.08

**TOTAL YEARLY FRAUD CLAIMS
ESTABLISHED**

\$ 61,901.00



CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT

**TOTAL CASELOAD AVERAGE
508**

**TOTAL COLLECTIONS
\$723,559.75**

2015-2016 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS



CRISIS INTERVENTION PROGRAM

\$75,717.21 (135) HOUSEHOLDS SERVED

LOW INCOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE

\$67,700.00 (272) HOUSEHOLDS SERVED

FEMA

\$942.00 (3) HOUSEHOLDS SERVED

SHARE THE WARMTH AND COOLING

\$6,839.37 (40) HOUSEHOLDS SERVED

DUKE SETTLEMENT/SHAREHOLDER

\$45,817.48 (132) HOUSEHOLDS SERVED

BLOSSMAN FUNDS

\$3,720.90 (19) HOUSEHOLDS SERVED

GOOD SAMARITAN

\$574.26 (9) INDIVIDUALS SERVED

FAITH AND COMMUNITY EMERGENCY SERVICES

\$1,984.45 (17) INDIVIDUALS SERVED

CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES

This is where child welfare begins. Law Enforcement, school personnel, medical professionals, and other members of the community make reports of suspected neglect, abuse and/or dependency every day. In FY 2015-2016, The CPS unit consisted of 4 investigators/assessors and 1 intake worker.

Services are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If you, or someone you know, have reason to believe that a child under the age of 18 is being abused, neglected, or is dependent, you are legally obligated to make a report. To make a report during business hours, please call (828) 488-6921. If it is after business hours or a weekend or holiday, please call Swain County dispatch at (828) 488-2197 and ask for the on-call social worker.

Reporting Child Abuse, Neglect or Dependency

During FY 2015-2016, there were **540** victim children whose families were assessed by Swain DSS Child Protective Services social workers based on reports of abuse, neglect, and/or dependency that were made to the Agency. North Carolina has a mandatory reporting law that states **"Any person or institution who has cause to suspect that any juvenile is abused, neglected, or dependent as defined by NC statute or has died as the result of maltreatment, shall report the case of that juvenile to the director of the department of social services in the county where the juvenile resides or is found."**

Please see the following links for NC legislation and NC DHHS policy surrounding mandatory reporting and protections for mandatory reporters:

<https://www2.ncdhhs.gov/info/olm/manuals/dss/csm-60/man/CS1407.pdf>

http://www.ncga.state.nc.us/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter_7b/gs_7b-302.html

http://www.ncleg.net/enactedlegislation/statutes/html/bysection/chapter_7b/gs_7b-309.html

2015-16 Breakdown of Reporters are as follows:

Anonymous: 49
Child Care Providers: 4
Educational Personnel: 67
Law Enforcement/Court Personnel: 75
Medical Personnel: 51
Relative: 51
Non-Relative: 77
Human Service Personnel: 53
Victim: 1
Parent: 13



CPS IN HOME SERVICES 2015-2016

In-Home Services are legally mandated and provided to families who have had a substantiation of abuse, neglect or dependency, or a finding of “In need of Services”, due to a parent being unable to ensure safety for their child(ren). A significant trend has been set that the contributing factor causing neglect in families recommended for In-Home Services is Substance Abuse. Substance Abuse is the most difficult behavior to change in order for the family to provide for the well-being needs of their child(ren).

The expectation upon entering In-Home Services is that within three months (90 days) there should be services in place to improve parenting capabilities. The parents must indicate changes in behavior to ensure the children can be safely maintained in the home. Since 2015, Child Welfare in North Carolina is reinforcing that children need to be in the home with the parents during participation in In-Home Services, and if they are not safe in the home within that three-month period, court action must be considered. The fact is....in most cases Substance Abuse cannot be cured in just three months. Because of this, In-Home Services numbers have gone down, and Foster Care cases have been on the rise.

Number of In-Home Cases in 2015-16: 56

Number of cases carried over from previous year: 27

Number of New In Home Services Cases: 29



***Of the 29 new cases transferred to In-Home Services in 2015-2016, 23 were neglect due to Substance Abuse.**

Foster Care Services

Children are placed in the care of the agency via Court ordered custody, Voluntary-Placement Agreements, or Release for adoption. Permanency planning for children ensures a plan of care targeting the most goal oriented and least restrictive environment for children in achieving one year to permanency.

The following are numbers for Fiscal Year 2015-16:

57 Monthly average of children in care in Swain County.

18 Total number of children that achieved permanence through reunification with a parent, guardianship, or adoption.

Ever thought about being a foster or adoptive parent? Take this quiz at <http://ncswlearn.org/foster> or fill out the [Foster/Adopt Inquiry](#) and return it to Swain County DSS to find out more information.



AVERAGE COST OF BOARD RATE

Child Age Group	Family Foster Home	Therapeutic Home	Residential Facility
0-5 yrs	\$475 month	\$1,433 month	\$4,279 month
6-12 yrs	\$581 month	\$1,564 month	\$4,437 month
13-18yrs	\$634 month	\$1,638 month	\$4,516 month

Do you know the difference between custody, guardianship and adoption?

Custody : When a person or entity (such as a county department of social services) is responsible for the care and well-being of a child and has the legal authority to consent on behalf of the child, but the child's parents maintain their parental rights. Custody can be restored to the parents by the court if the parent proves capable of caring for the child.

Guardianship: is when a person is responsible for the care and well-being of a child and has the legal authority to consent on behalf of a child. Under a guardianship arrangement the child's parents maintain their parental rights. However, courts overturn guardianship only if it is determined the guardian is no longer capable of caring for the child or maintaining their safety.

Adoption: is the process by which an adult becomes the permanent, legal parent of a child. Adoptions can occur through relinquishments, termination of parental rights, or consent to adoption by a birth parent. Adoption severs the previous legal parent-child relationship and creates a new legal parent-child relationship between the adoptee and adoptive parent. Sometimes children who have been adopted also maintain contact with their birth family. This is called an "open adoption".

There are essentially three types of foster care placements paid for by Swain County DSS:

*Family Foster Home,
Therapeutic Foster Home,
Residential Facility (Group Home)*



PLACEMENT IN CHILD WELFARE

Foster Care is a temporary living arrangement for abused, neglected, and dependent children who need a safe place to live when their parents or another relative cannot take care of them. Often their families face issues such as illness, alcohol and drug addiction, or homelessness. When the County Department of Social Services believes a child is not safe, and a Judge agrees, DSS takes custody of that child and finds a foster home for him or her. The length of stay in foster care varies from a few days to much longer. The foster family, DSS, and the birth family work together to return children to their own homes as quickly as possible.



Foster Parent Licensing

North Carolina law requires every potential foster parent to complete thirty (30) hours of training prior to being licensed along with an intensive home study. The training includes information on topics such as child abuse and neglect, working with birth parents, and helping foster children deal with the issues they face. It also helps potential foster parents think about how parenting another child may affect their family.

Foster families are recruited and trained to care for abused and neglected children. These families are licensed to care for foster children temporarily, while their parents work with social work professionals to resolve their family issues. Relatives may also be licensed as foster parents. Foster parents may be considered as adoptive parents if their foster child becomes free for adoption.

Together as a Community You Can Help Raise a Foster Child

The majority of our children are placed out of county. Our goal is to have at least five foster homes licensed by June 30th, 2017. As of July 1st, we have completed all license requirements and waiting on State approval. There are two homes currently in the process of being licensed.



“YOU CAN BE A FOSTER PARENT”



Swain County Social Services has joined with two surrounding counties to provide training and support to foster parents and kinship providers. The group meets every second Monday evening of the month.

Swain County attends a collaborative meeting once a month with seven surrounding counties to discuss the barriers to successfully licensing families in the western part of the state. Collaboration is the first step in identifying strategies and eliminating barriers. Swain DSS plans to maintain no less than 7 licensed homes in our county.

We are currently networking with area churches to schedule speaking engagements to educate the members about being a foster parent.

We promote the opportunity to become a foster parent in Swain County at all community events through speaking engagements and passing out flyers.



Interested?

If you are interested in learning more about becoming a foster parent, we can offer information that will help you decide if foster parenting is right for you. For more information contact :

Carrie Bryson at (828) 488-6921 Ext. 2006 carrie.bryson@swaincountync.gov

or Bree Clawson (828) 488-6921 Ext. 2042 bree.clawson@swaincountync.gov

ADULT SERVICES 2015-2016

REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE

12 Adults

An adult has been unable to manage their own finances, and has been appointed a social worker to provide case management and budgeting for the adult.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE IN HOME

6 Adults

4 Slots available

Medicaid eligible adult receives financial assistance in order to help them live safely in their home as an alternative to moving to an Assisted Living Facility.

ADULT PROTECTIVE SERVICES

89 Total Reports Received
26 Accepted for Evaluation
15 Received Community Outreach
19 Received Information and Referral

GUARDIANSHIP

15 Wards of the State

Adult has been declared incompetent and in need of a "Disinterested Public Agent" to make decisions on the adult's behalf.

OTHER SERVICES AVAILABLE

Individual and Family Adjustment
Adult Care Home Monitoring and Licensing
Transition to Community Living

To make a call of suspected Abuse, Neglect, or EXPLOITATION of an elderly or disabled adult, please contact Swain DSS at 828-488-6921 (8:00 am to 5:00 pm) or 828-488-2196 (911) after business hours and holidays.





CAP DA COMES TO SWAIN COUNTY DSS

Community Alternative Program for Disabled Adults (CAP-DA), is now being administered through Swain County DSS. CAP-DA is a Medicaid Home and Community-Based Service Waiver Program authorized under the Social Security Act, which provides services to elderly and disabled adults. This program is designed to provide an alternative to institutionalization for recipients who prefer to remain in their homes and would be at risk of being placed in an institution (Nursing Home) without these services. Swain County currently has 73 slots assigned to assist the elderly and disabled Medicaid eligible recipients. The CAP DA staff at DSS hope to fill all of the slots and provide quality case management to these very deserving adults.



COMMUNITY RECOGNITION



The Grove Church purchased book bags and all recommended school supplies for Swain DSS foster children for the past 8 years.



Kim Lossie and 25 sponsors donated 25 *Thirty One* bags full of items for children coming into care.

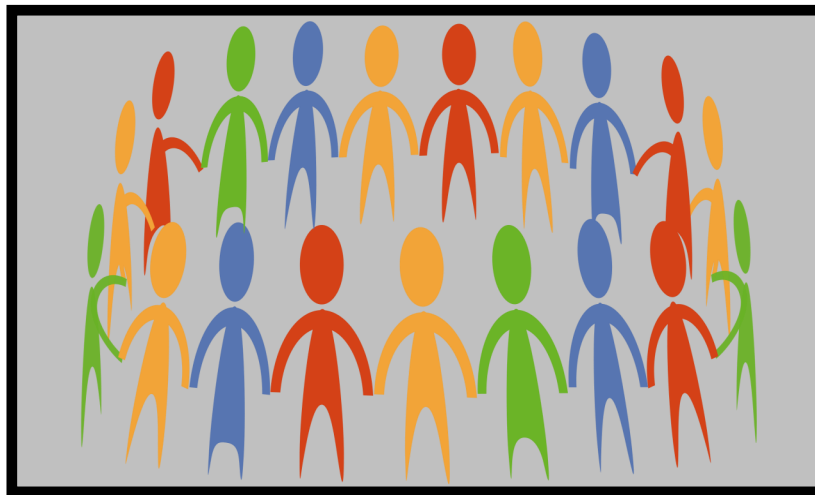


We Appreciate You

A Special Thanks to the community for their generous donations through the year to support Swain County's Foster Children and the Elderly:

Anthony's Pizzeria, Inc.	B & C Overstock and Yard Sale
Bar-B-Que Wagon	BoJangles
Bryson City Cork and Bean Bistro	Bryson City Outdoors
Box Car Café	Charles Heath Gallery
Cherokee Historical Association	Coca-Cola Company
Country Road Farms	Crisp Accounting and Tax Service
Dollar General Store	Don's Guns and Pawn
Elaine Shoaf	Elizabeth Burns Cook
Everett Street Diner	Fly Fishing in the Smokies
Food Lion	Fryemont Inn
Getcha Graphics	Great Smoky Mountain Railroad
Guayabitos	Hallmark Store
Historic Calhoun Hotel	Humanite' Boutique
Jimmy Mac's	Kameron Hancock/Main Attractions
Janet and Chris Jones	Lift Massage Therapy
Loose Moose	Madison's On Main
McClanahan's	Mountain Perks
Nantahala Outdoor Center	NC Clampitt Hardware Company
Nate and Nicks	O'Neal's Bookstore
Pasqualino's	Pepsi Cola Company
Pursenality	Smokemont Riding Stable
Southern Charm	The Chocolate Shoppe
Textures	The Filling Station
The Grove Church	Tickled Pink
The Iron Skillet	Tuckaseigee Fly Shop
Village Florist	Wild Fern Studios and Gallery
Wild Water Rafting and Zip Line	Alarka Church of God
Sawmill Creek Baptist Church Youth	Kristy Parton
Sandy Fortner/ Gracey Manor	Carrie Powell, Swain High Athletics
DSS Employees for Blankets/Deserts	Darnell Farms

We would like to thank the Bryson City Methodist Church for always allowing our Agency the use of the Fellowship Hall for agency meetings and special events.



Devotions are provided each week from our area ministers and community members. This time is available to all staff for enrichment, encouragement, and stress management. These community members give of their time freely and we are very grateful.



We all have the
power
to stop
child abuse.

April is Child Abuse Awareness month.
We place Blue Pinwheels around town to bring awareness to
the community about Child Abuse and Neglect.

Swain County DSS was represented at the 2016 Relay for Life



Get Involved

Swain County DSS joins other community agencies in bringing awareness to Elderly Abuse. Elderly Abuse Awareness Day is a state proclamation by the Governor of NC and takes place every June 15th.

The public is welcome and invited to participate in this walk.



SMOKY MOUNTAIN RIDE IN

The Smoky Mountain Ride In comes to Bryson City each June. Hundreds of motorcycle enthusiasts from around the country take part in raising money to purchase Christmas for Swain County Foster Children. In June of 2016, the group, along with the hard work of Swain Co DSS employees, raised \$5,003.00. A huge thank-you goes out to those who helped organize the event this year.

Thanks to Gary Baker,
Steve Vergo and Shorty
Shook



Also pictured representing
DSS; Carole Maennle and
Bree Clawson



CHRISTMAS CHEER FOR COMMUNITY CHILDREN



Swain County DSS partners with the Swain County Family Resource Center in a program called Christmas Cheer. Applications are taken in November and December to assist Swain County Families in need, to assist with Christmas presents. Swain DSS also provides staff to help take applications. This is a vital program in our community and we are proud to be a part of the Christmas Cheer Program.



The Front Desk and Front Services Staff of Harrah's Casino sponsored Christmas gifts for three of the children in Foster Care this past year.



DSS Staff prepared and donated Easter bags this year for our Swain County foster children.



I would like to say a big Thank you to our DSS Employees and the community. Our Agency could not accomplish what we do without the hard work and dedication from each and every person that contributes to our causes. Whether monetarily, or giving of their time, words cannot express my gratitude. Without you ,our families would go without during the special holidays that we all enjoy with our families.

Thank you– Sheila Sutton